Wilson, J. M.

" " "

Chinese wedding.

AGE

812

W693 C

812
W693L

RAMATIC LIBRARY April 16, 1896 PUBLISHED WEEKLY
Vol. I No. 16 Subscription Price, $7.50

Front Edt

961

KEYSTONE EDITION

of

Popular Plays

A CHINESE WEDDING

THE Penn Publishing Company
Philadelphia

(0-8) 9

SHOEMAKER'S

Best Selections

FOR

READINGS AND RECITATIONS

Numbers 1 to 28 Now Issued

Paper Binding, each number, - - 30 cents

Cloth " " " - - - 50 "

This series was formerly called "The Elocutionist's Annual," the first 17 numbers being published under that title. The change in name is made because it is believed a more appropriate title is thus secured.

Teachers, Readers, Students, and all persons who have occasion to use books of this kind, concede this to be the best series of speakers published. The different numbers are compiled by leading elocutionists of the country, who have exceptional facilities for securing selections, and whose judgment as to their merits is invaluable. No trouble or expense is spared to obtain the very best readings and recitations, and much material is used by special arrangement with other publishers, thus securing the best selections from such American authors as Longfellow, Holmes, Whittier, Lowell, Emerson, Alice and Phœbe Cary, Mrs. Stowe, and many others. The foremost English authors are also represented, as well as the leading French and German writers.

Sold by all Booksellers and Newsdealers, or mailed upon receipt of price.

THE PENN PUBLISHING COMPANY

1020 Arch Street

Philadelphia

. A .

Chinese Wedding

A REPRESENTATION

OF THE WEDDING CEREMONY IN CHINA

ARRANGED AS A COSTUME PANTOMIME IN SEVEN SCENES, ADAPTED TO CHURCH ENTERTAINMENTS, SCHOOL EXHIBITIONS, SOCIAL GATHERINGS, ETC.

BY

BERTHA M. WILSON

Author of "The Tragedy of Blind Margaret," "The Christmas Star," Etc., Etc.

Philadelphia
The Penn Publishing Company
1895

Copyright 1895 by The Penn Publishing Company

R. C.
812
W693C

PUBLISHER'S NOTICE

THE purpose of this pantomime is to portray vividly everything pertaining to the ceremony of a Chinese Wedding, from the espousal to the final religious rite, and in order to understand each step in the pantomime a description of the ceremony is given in the following pages, which should be read to the audience, either entire or such portions as may be considered necessary to give the information required for an intelligent enjoyment of the performance.

It is suggested that, after the first reading, the description of each scene (pages 12, 13, and 14) should be read a second time immediately before the scene is represented in pantomime as a means of refreshing the minds of the audience.

401839

A CHINESE WEDDING

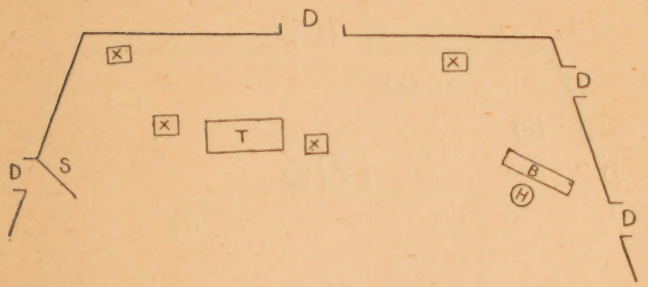
PANTOMIME IN SEVEN SCENES

I. The Espousal.
II. The Preparation of the Bride.
III. Bringing Home the Bride.
IV. The Wedding Breakfast.
V. The Guests' Supper.
VI. Viewing the Bride.
VII. Worshipping the Ancestral Tablets.

CHARACTERS

Male.	*Female.*
Bridegroom.	Go-Betwèen.
Bridegroom's Father.	Mistress of Ceremonies.
Bride's Father.	Bride.
Wedding Guests.	Bride's Mother.
Coolies or Chair-bearers.	Bride's Sister.
Wedding Servants.	Bride's Sister-in-Law.
Bride's Diminutive Nephews.	Women of Bridegroom's Household.

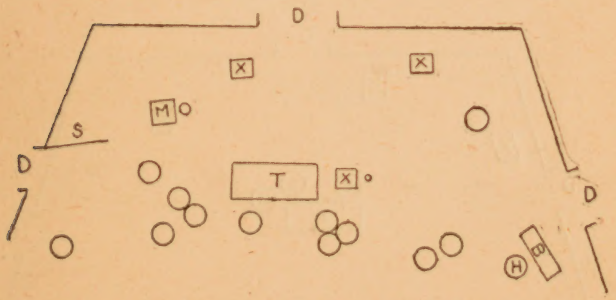
SCENE I



HOUSE OF BRIDE'S PARENTS

D.—Doors or entrances.
X.—Chairs.
T.—Table.
B.—Bench.
S.—Screen.
H.—Stool.

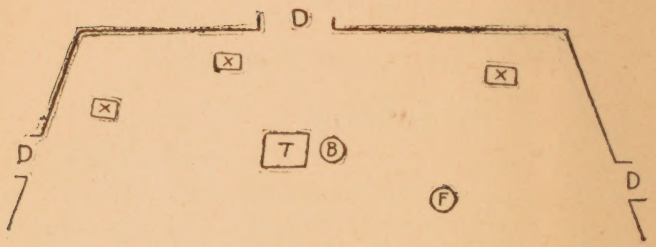
SCENE II



HOUSE OF BRIDE'S PARENTS

D.—Doors or entrances.
X.—Chairs.
T.—Table.
B.—Bench.
S.—Screen.
H.—Stool.
O.—Red boxes containing trousseau.
M.—Mother spinning.

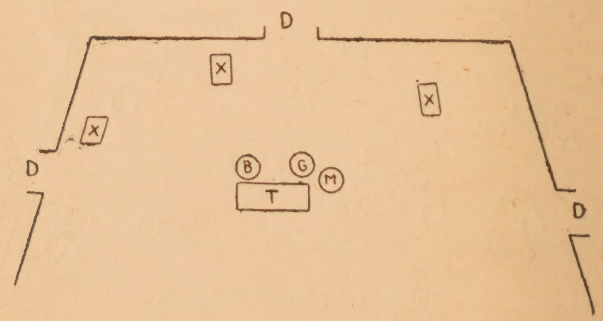
SCENE III



HOUSE OF BRIDEGROOM'S FATHER

D.—Doors or entrances.
X.—Chairs.
T.—Table.
B.—Where bridegroom stands.
F.—Where bridegroom's father stands to receive the bride.

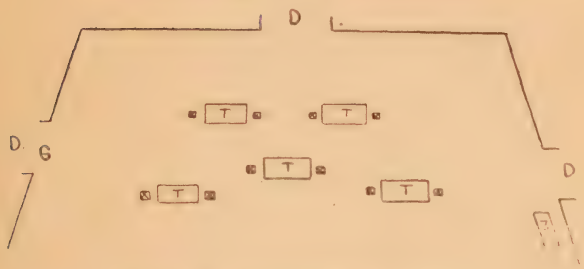
SCENE IV.



HOUSE OF BRIDEGROOM'S FATHER

D.—Doors or entrances.
X.—Chairs.
T.—Table.
B.—Bride.
G.—Bridegroom.
M.—Mistress of Ceremonies.

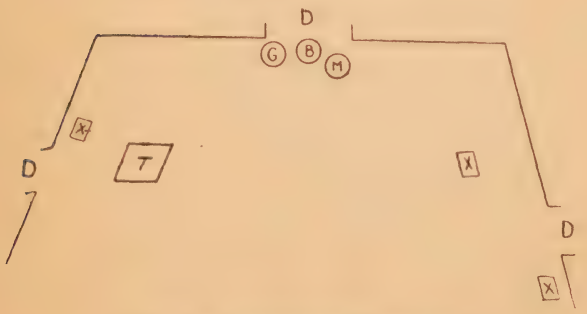
SCENE V



HOUSE OF BRIDEGROOM'S PARENTS

D.—Doors or entrances. T.—Tables.
X.—Chairs. M.—Musicians.
G.—Entrance for guests.

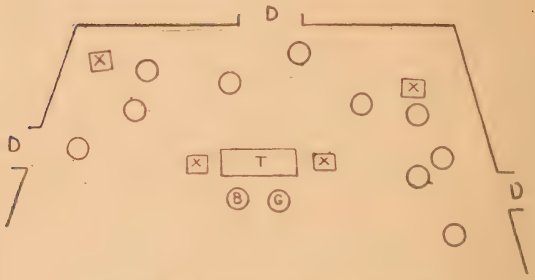
SCENE VI



HOUSE OF BRIDEGROOM'S PARENTS

D.—Doors or entrances. B.—Place where bride stands.
X.—Chairs. G.—"Go-between."
T.—Table. M.—Mistress of Ceremonies

SCENE VII



HOUSE OF BRIDEGROOM'S PARENTS

D.—Doors or entrances.
X.—Chairs.
T.—Table on which are the ancestral tablets.
B.—Bride.
G.—Groom.
O.—Members of families and friends.

A CHINESE WEDDING

INTRODUCTION

Of all the customs of Eastern countries none perhaps are more interesting and peculiar than those pertaining to marriage. In no two countries are these ceremonies exactly alike, and even in two adjoining countries they are often as dissimilar as though widely separated. Indeed, they vary in detail in different portions of the same country.

In China the ceremony is very elaborate, continuing several days, closing with a religious rite known as "Worshipping the Ancestral Tablets." These tablets are erected in every house, and this worship is as ancient almost as the Empire itself. At death certain rites are solemnized by the Chinese at the tomb of their parents, and upon the proper observance of these depends, as a Chinaman believes, the repose of his soul. The persons fitted to perform these rites are sons; therefore marriage has a significance that is barely understood by us. Like Jews, the Chinese regard children, especially sons, as the chief blessing of life. Death therefore loses half its terrors if sons are born, who, by marrying and becoming also fathers of sons, thus insure the proper attendance at the tomb and the due celebration of the necessary sacrifices.

Marriage is considered the most important of five human relationships. It is accompanied with many

formalities, and these are accorded great prominence. A marriage procession through the streets is one of the features of the ceremony, and is always viewed with becoming respect by spectators along the route.

In China the sexes do not associate as in our own or European countries, although among the lower and poorer classes this sometimes happens. In no case may a man or woman touch each other in giving or receiving, and it is even held improper for a man to save a woman from drowning. There is no opportunity, except in rare instances, for the two persons most interested to meet and pledge their mutual love. In the selection of a wife, or in other matters connected with it, in which we would regard the son as vitally concerned he has no voice, and rarely has an opportunity to see his betrothed until she has become his wife. All arrangements for marriage are entered into by the parents of the pair to be wedded, and are negotiated by a person called a "go-between," usually a woman, who engages in this as a business. She is supposed to have a knowledge of all marriageable men and women in a neighborhood.

The obligation of children to fulfill the marriage contracts made by their parents is enforced by law, even to the annulment of an agreement made by a son in ignorance of the one made by his parents. Pre-nuptial elopements rarely occur, the penalty, if captured, being imprisonment as long as the vindictiveness of the parents is unsatisfied.

A mother upon her death-bed once insisted upon the marriage of her son, the ceremony to be performed at her bedside. When the ceremony was over, and the bridegroom, in pursuance of custom, raised the veil of the bride, he beheld a leper. In this case the "go-between" had accepted a bribe to represent the bride as a veritable Hebe. Frequently,

for a bribe, she will represent a dissolute man as a paragon of virtue.

Infants are often betrothed, and nothing but death annuls the contract. In the case of a girl, even this is not always considered sufficient. One maiden clasped the memorial tablet of her betrothed and went through the marriage ceremony with it. Another starved herself upon hearing of the death of her betrothed, and it is a frequent occurrence for young ladies to refuse to listen to a second marriage proposal.

There are six ceremonies connected with a Chinese wedding, commencing with the employment of the "go-between," until the knot is tied. When the first of these ceremonies is performed, the betrothal is binding, though the superstition of the Chinese is so strong that a trivial circumstance will sometimes be regarded unlucky, and lead to a termination of the contract. As for instance, if a china bowl should be broken, or a valuable article be lost within three days of the engagement, nothing could induce the contracting parties to marry.

The ceremony may now be described more minutely.

The "go-between" having been notified by the son's parents to select a wife for him, calls upon the parents of the woman she considers suitable, taking a card upon which is inscribed the ancestral name of the suitor and certain symbols denoting the year, month, day, and hour of his birth. If her parents are inclined to entertain the matter favorably, they consult a fortune-teller, to ascertain whether such a marriage is likely to prove auspicious. If the horoscope is satisfactory a return card is given to the "go-between," who takes it to the man's parents. Everything being acceptable, the man prepares two large cards, containing particulars of the engage-

ment, one of which he keeps, pasting on it a paper dragon—the other is sent to the lady, on which is a phœnix—these being emblems of conjugal fidelity. Presents are next sent to the girl's father, their value depending upon the wealth of the families, after which the "go-between" requests the parties to select a lucky day for the wedding.

Scene I. illustrates the "go-between" presenting the gifts to the bride's father and also the signing of the betrothal contract.

Etiquette requires the groom to ask the bride's father to name the happy day, who in turn requests the bride's future father-in-law to decide. The groom next exhibits a letter in which the lucky date is mentioned. Everything that has thus transpired has been known in advance by all concerned; but, in accordance with Chinese form, is as carefully and studiously concealed as if neither party was aware of the other's knowledge.

Although in most countries a wedding is a joyous event, and usually looked forward to with blissful anticipations by the expectant bride, such is not the case in China. Instead of rejoicing she gives herself over to weeping, and spends several days immediately preceding the wedding in tears. Her trousseau and household furniture are packed to be sent to her future home, which is always the house of her betrothed's parents. Other preparations are made for the ceremony. When the day arrives the bride, closely veiled, is placed in a sedan chair and carried to the home of her future father-in-law, a procession of friends going in advance. At its head is borne a baked pig, that the procession may pass safely while the evil spirits are devouring it. Before starting the sedan is locked by the mother, and the key sent to the bridegroom. Halfway the bride is met by friends of the bridegroom,

who escort her the rest of the distance. The coming of the procession is announced by loud music of a band and the discharge of fire-crackers.

Scene II. shows the bride completing her toilet, and leaving the home of her childhood.

In Scene III. the bride alights from the sedan, and is led, still closely veiled, to the room where the bridegroom awaits her. She is presented to her future father-in-law by the "go-between," who, in turn, is now paid for her services by the bridegroom's father.

Scene IV. depicts the bride and groom, who sit down side by side without speaking, each endeavoring to sit on a part of the dress of the other; the one who succeeds in so doing will, it is believed, rule the house. The "go-between" serves them with wine, the bride going through the motions of drinking only, as her veil interferes. The bridegroom having finished his meal, he rises and attempts to catch a glimpse of his bride by pushing aside her veil. This she resists with true Chinese coquetry!

In Scene V. the friends (only men) of the bridegroom and his father are seen at the wedding breakfast. Chinese music, synonym for clash of discordant sounds, accompanies the feast. Servants bring viands, and all proceedings are eagerly watched by the women of the household, who peer curiously through the half-screened doors.

In Scene VI. the bride is viewed by the wedding guests, who exhibit Chinese gallantry by commenting on the diminutiveness of her feet, and by rudely attempting to raise the veil from her face—which attempt she as vigorously resists. The guests finally fling down cash as payment for the enjoyment received. This money is used to defray the expenses of the wedding ceremonies.

Finally the bride and groom repair to the room where burn the eternal fires before the tablets of the bridegroom's ancestors. They prostrate themselves three times before these tablets, and then the bride, gathering up her tunic, passes among the assembled friends and relatives, all of whom throw in cash. Presenting herself before her lord, she casts the money at his feet; he raises her veil, beholding her face for the first time; and the pair are duly wedded! These are represented in Scene VII.

Feastings and rejoicing follow, lasting several days.

Scene I.—The Espousal.

Scene.—Plain room; deal table c.; bamboo chair at R. and L. of it; teapot, and two cups and saucers on table; bench and bamboo chair L.; large bamboo chair R.; door REAR CENTRE; Chinese panels on walls, and lanterns on each side of door; high Chinese screen, R. F. D.

Go-Between's Costume.—Chinese shoes, with thick, white soles; wide, baggy trousers, or, rather, divided skirt, of green, trimmed with yellow; tunic shaped like a long jacket, reaching to knees or below, with wide, flaring sleeves, made of maroon silk embroidered in green and gold. Hair drawn up tight in knot at top of head, with gilt pins stuck through it. Long earrings, necklaces, bracelets, etc. Fan hung around neck.

This same style costume can be used by all female characters, the difference being made simply in color, trimmings, embroideries, length of tunic, width of trousers, etc.

Enter Go-Between, R. F. D., carrying parasol, scroll, a big cake, and strings of money, or "cash," made of round pieces of pasteboard covered with gilt paper, and having square hole in centre, all strung on strong pieces of twine.

Go-Between knocks at screen, walks in. Bride's

sister-in-law, young Chinese of about twenty, enters side door, REAR. L., followed by one or two toddlers—miniature Chinamen. Go-Between and sister-in-law bow; each shakes her own left hand with right; Go-Between sets cake and parasol on table. Sister-in-law motions toddlers out of room; some resistance, force exerted, and young Chinamen depart, fists in eyes and mouths distended as for a howl. Sister-in-law then motions Go-Between to be seated; sets out tea things on table, pours tea, and offers; both talk and fan and laugh in pantomime, while sipping tea. This finished, Go-Between offers large red card. Sister-in-law reads, elevates eyebrows; sets down tea-cup, goes to door REAR C., calls, motions, and returns with middle-aged woman leaning on shoulder. Young Chinese girl about eleven follows, carrying embroidery, and younger sister about seven, carrying pan of peas. All except child hobble on tiptoes, as if feet were bound and very small. All bow, and shake their own hands. Two sisters then sit down at left, the elder on bench, working embroidery, the younger on stool at feet, shelling peas.

Go-Between presents scroll to elder woman; this is looked over. Chinaman, bride's father, appears at door REAR C.; all bow low. Then Go-Between motions to him. He examines scroll; shakes head, looks at daughter (older girl). Points to scroll, and looks inquiringly at Go-Between. She bows, presents the cake and strings of cash. He counts cash, looks at daughter, lifts cake, looks it over, shakes head; Go-Between then draws more cash from under tunic,

and presents it. Chinaman again shakes head, looks at daughter, jingles cash, sighs, appears to think. Then motions to girl with peas, who runs out of room, and reappears with ink and brush. Chinaman signs scroll, mother (the older woman) wipes eyes, cake is cut and a piece offered Go-Between, who takes it, bows, fans, takes the scroll, shakes her own hands, walking toward screen, raises parasol, and exit R. F. D.

CURTAIN.

SCENE II.—PREPARING THE BRIDE (*five years later*).

Scene, the same. Many large red boxes scattered about floor and half-filled with clothes.

Costume, *Bride's*.—Red silk trousers, green silk petticoat, blue silk tunic.

Bride discovered sitting by table, on which is mirror in bamboo frame. Sister-in-law is just putting gilt ornaments in Bride's hair, which is done up with puffs at each side and on top in butterfly shape, and fairly covered with gilt pins. Mother sits spinning at right, looking up now and then and nodding approval. Younger Sister comes in L. F. with large-glass bowl on tray. In bowl is water, in which float twelve different kinds of flowers. Sister stands at one side, looking on admiringly as Sister-in-law takes a lotos (artificial) and sprinkles water over Bride. Bride then stands up, and bright red silk robe is put on. This is long, reaching to floor, left open

all the way down front, and has long flowing sleeves. Carved fan is handed to Bride; Sister holds glass for her to see herself. Then veil of red gauze is put over face, and over this a long red fringe, bound around forehead and falling in front of face.

Go-Between enters R. F. D. and knocks at screen; she is accompanied by "Mistress of Ceremonies"—an old Chinese woman, wrinkled, gray hair, very yellow and scrawny face, gorgeous gown. These two are followed by two natives carrying sedan chair. Chair-bearers may be dressed simply in typical costume or in brownish yellow tights, straw sandals, trunks, wide conical-shaped hats. Sedan chair is made of a large drygoods box with strong poles or beams fastened at side or at bottom. Poles are gilded and box covered with red cloth, gilt ornamentation painted around edges of chair and full-length opening cut each side, with red curtains hung in front of them.

When Go-between and Mistress of Ceremonies enter Bride cries, covering her face with her long sleeves, bows prostrate three times before her mother, who holds out her hands as if in blessing. Go-between bows, fans, points toward screen; Father appears at C. REAR, and all follow Bride to R. F., Sister and Sister-in-law clapping covers on red boxes and carrying them. Bride again cries, waves adieu, and she and her boxes are stowed in the sedan-chair; coolies raise the chair, Bride waves adieu, her family throws rice after the chair.

CURTAIN.

Scene III.—Bringing Home the Bride.

Scene.—Back scene hung with bright-red curtains; paper scrolls, with immense and elaborate red, black, and gilt characters hung here and there. Table at c., piled with cakes, candies, and fruits.

It is a good plan to stretch strong twine back and forth, overhead, from side to side, and front to rear. Thus a network is formed, to which lanterns may be hung as if suspended from ceiling. The effect is dazzling and picturesque. Lanterns not lighted during this scene.

Costumes, Bridegroom.—Green trousers, brown tunic, black hat, with red tassel on top. *Bridegroom's Father.*—Under-tunic of dark blue, embroidered with gold, extending about half-way below knees. Over-tunic of light blue, embroidered with silver and gold. Chinese dragon or bird, embroidered on breast and back; strings of cash around neck. Carries satin fan; wears mustache; hat red and blue, shaped like a slouch, with brim turned up back and front and down at sides; spectacles.

Sedan chair brought in, L. F. D.; Father-in-law comes forward; Bridegroom waits curiously at table. Go-Between presents Bride to Bridegroom's Father, and is presented with a string of cash to pay for services; then three squeaky fiddles and a drum strike up.

CURTAIN.

Scene IV.—The Wedding Breakfast.

Scene, same. Centre-table replaced by larger table, with various bowls of steaming dishes on it. Bridegroom seated on one side, with chopsticks, dipping into the dishes, and evidently enjoying repast. Bride seated opposite, with hands folded and head bowed. Mistress of Ceremonies stands beside Bridegroom, with chopsticks, picking out choice morsels, holding them above his head, chanting a lot of Chinese words in high monotonous sing-song,* then dropping morsels into Bridegroom's mouth.

This is repeated several times. Bridegroom then rises, stretches; expression of bland satisfaction. Mistress of Ceremonies lays down chopsticks and points to Bride; unties inner veil. Bride rises, with red fringe still hanging over face. Go-Between enters REAR C., chuckles, with hand on lips. Bridegroom's Father appears REAR C., with broad smile, as Bridegroom tries to pull aside fringe to get a glimpse of Bride's face.

CURTAIN.

---

*Suggested words, void of sense, suitable for various chants of Mistress of Ceremonies:

Hong kong chong yun foo chow, kui kiang cheu whan keangi, santsun chang-ngo!

Or the equally musical and suggestive:

Yung-ching foo chow kien lung hang chow kwang tun chee foo Hwong ti che whan!

Scene V.—The Guests' Supper.

Scene, same.—Lanterns lighted; five red tables three feet square take place of centre table; seats for two at each; at each place are wine cups, chopsticks, earthen spoon, small saucer, dish of sweetmeats. At each corner of table wine-decanter.

Chinese women stand peeping in rear door, over which a thin curtain or screen has been thrown.

Guests' costumes.—Tunics reaching to feet, red, tassled caps, fans, spectacles, string of cash.

Bridegroom's Father stands at right front to welcome guests (by bowing low and shaking his own hand while guests do same), who arrive singly and by twos and threes. They wait at entrance till host goes to place, moves chopsticks and chair slightly, and makes low obeisance. After all have been appointed their places, all sit down simultaneously. Father directs servants as they bring in bowls on trays. When host sets dish on table, all at that table rise. One bowl is set in centre of each table. When supper begins, four musicians file in with fiddles and drum at REAR CENTRE and sit at left front and play! Guests dip chopsticks into central dish and occasionally pour wine; demeanor grave throughout; occasional bows and monosyllables. Mistress of Ceremonies comes in REAR C. with tray on which are many small cups of tea; goes to each table, chants some Chinese words over tea, which each guest drinks, and then jingles cash into emptied cup;

exit Mistress of Ceremonies at R. D. Host rises, all follow and file out R. D. Women flock in REAR C. D.—sit down to dishes left by men, jabbering vigorously. Musicians leave L. D.

CURTAIN.

Scene VI.—Viewing the Bride.

Scene, same.—Tables removed; men enter R. F., holding lighted candles in hand. Bride, with red fringe still over face and eyes fixed on floor, stands in doorway REAR C., supported by Go-Between and Mistress of Ceremonies. Men approach Bride, and seem to urge her to come out further into the room, but she moves only when dragged forward a step or two occasionally by the two women. Men point to Bride's foot admiringly. They peer into her face, holding candles close and pulling fringe aside, Bride throws sleeves over face. Men turn away laughing, throwing cash on table. Others repeat above actions.

CURTAIN.

Scene VII.—Worshipping the Ancestral Tablets.

Scene, same.—Red chairs covered with red cloth placed each side of table; on table are lighted candles, burning incense (burning damp wood will do), and a slab of wood placed perpendicularly. Bride

enters R. F., Bridegroom L. F., meet at C. Bridegroom's Father and other members of his family grouped around.

Bride and Groom kneel before table, bowing heads to ground three times. Bride then gathers up skirt of tunic and goes from person to person. Each throws in money. This the Bride throws finally at her lord's feet. Bridgroom raises the Bride's veil and beholds her face, when Go-Between spreads hands over them in blessing.

CURTAIN.

Practical Elocution

By J. W. Shoemaker, A. M.

300 pages

Cloth, Leather Back, $1.25

This work is the outgrowth of actual class-room experience, and is a practical, common-sense treatment of the whole subject. It is clear and concise, yet comprehensive, and is absolutely free from the entangling technicalities that are so frequently found in books of this class.

Conversation, which is the basis of all true Elocution, is regarded as embracing all the germs of speech and action. Prominent attention is therefore given to the cultivation of this the most common form of human expression.

General principles and practical processes are presented for the cultivation of strength, purity, and flexibility of Voice, for the improvement of distinctness and correctness in articulation, and for the development of Soul Power in delivery.

The work includes a systematic treatment of Gesture in its several departments of position, facial expression, and bodily movement, a brief system of Gymnastics bearing upon vocal development and grace of movement, and also a chapter on Methods of Instruction, for teachers.

Sold by all booksellers, or sent, prepaid, upon receipt of price.

The Penn Publishing Company

1020 Arch Street. Philadelphia

(SHOEMAKER'S)

The National School

OF

Elocution and Oratory

No. 1110 WALNUT STREET

PHILADELPHIA

PERSONS wishing to obtain the most advanced and the best instruction in Elocution and Oratory should attend this institution.

It is the oldest school of the kind in America. Its students and graduates, numbering thousands, are to be found in all parts of this country and Canada, occupying the most prominent positions as Public Readers, Teachers of Elocution, Clergymen, Lecturers, Actors, etc.

Courses of one and two years. Grants diplomas and confers degrees, which have an intrinsic value. A full corps of eminent instructors, each a specialist in his own department.

Illustrated catalogue, giving full information, sent to any address on application.

The Summer Session of six weeks is held annually at Grimsby Park, Canada, one hour's ride from Niagara Falls. Thorough training is given in all branches of Elocution and Public Speech. Write for prospectus.

GEO. B. HYNSON, Principal
1110 Walnut Street, Philadelphia

MRS. J. W. SHOEMAKER
Vice-Principal

36 (-9)

3 1198 03318 6722

N/1198/03318/6722X

University of Pennsylvania Library
Circulation Department

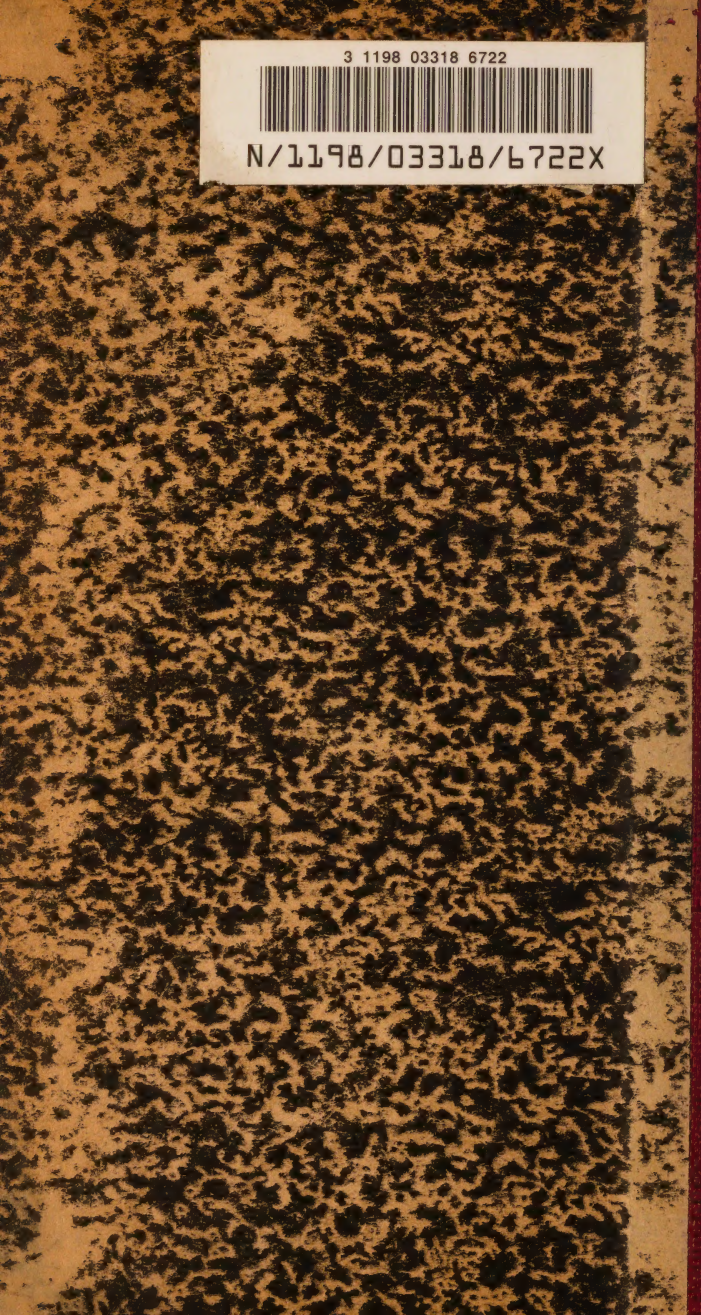
Please return this book as soon as you have finished with it. In order to avoid a fine it must be returned by the latest date stamped below.

VAN PELT

RETURNED
JUL 24 2002

JUL 24 2002

JUL 23 2002


3 1198 03318 6722
N/1198/03318/6722X